

Story – *Abuela's Weave*

Description **This lesson is designed for:**

- 40 – 50 minutes
 - 25-30 students
 - Spanish class
 - Grade K-5
 - Country of Origin: Guatemala
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Objectives **As a result of this lesson, students will be able to:**

- Identify Guatemala on a map.
 - Review and practice Spanish vocabulary.
 - Describe cloth woven on backstrap looms.
 - Explain ways the cloth relate to Mayan cultural identity.
 - On paper create their own Mayan cloth.
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Vocabulary

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|------------------------|------------------------------------|
| • La Abuela | Grandmother |
| • La Abuelita | Granny |
| • Tejer | Weave |
| • El Hilo | Thread |
| • El Telar | Loom |
| • Tapiz | Tapestry |
| • El/Los Huipil(es) | Traditional Blouse(s) |
| • La Fiesta de Pueblos | Town Fair |
| • Los Quetzales | A type of bird native to Guatemala |
| • La Sexta Avenida | Sixth Avenue |
| • La Séptima Avenida | Seventh Avenue |
| • La Avenida Ocho | Eighth Avenue |
| • El Parque Central | Central Park |
| • El Puestos | Stalls |
| • La Cesta | Basket |
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Materials

Related Files Provided with this Lesson

- Background information about Guatemala and Mayan weaving.
- Pictures of huipiles and Mayan weaving from Guatemala and Mexico.
- Huipil worksheet

Teachers Need to Provide

- Book, *Abuela's Weave* by Omar S. Castañeda
 - Map of Guatemala and Central America
 - Crayons or markers
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Activities

2 min. **Introduction**

- Find Guatemala on a map, identifying surrounding countries and bodies of water.
- Show the areas where the Maya live in Guatemala and the nearby mountains in Mexico.

15 min. ***Abuela's Weave***

- Read the story to the children.
- Discuss various aspects of Mayan life as the story is read.
- List characteristics of weaving and explain how it is done traditionally.

20 min. **Making a Huipil**

- Show various examples of hupiles and weavings. (See the Resource Section.)
- Using a picture of model backstrap loom, explain how the work is done by hand. (See the Resource Section.)
- Describe the meaning of the cloth woven by the Mayans. (See the Resource Section.)
- On a paper, students create their own hupil using a pattern, quetzals, or heroes.
- Share pictures with the class.

3 min. **Wrap Up**

- Ask students to summarize the importance of weaving and traditional dress to the Mayans in Guatemala.
 - Allow for any final questions students have.
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**Developed for Classroom Presentations
by a Teacher at a Center for Latin American Studies Workshop
University of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, PA**

Background Information

Guatemala

- Guatemala has 22 *departamentos* (similar to states).
- It shares borders with Mexico, Belize, Honduras, and El Salvador. The Caribbean Sea is to the East and the Pacific Ocean is to the west.
- Guatemala is located in Central America.
- Most people are *mestizo*, that is, a mix of American Indian (*indígenas*) and the white race. Some are *indígenas*, with Maya being the main American Indian group.
- Spanish is the official language, but people speak 23 other American Indian languages (such as Quiche and Cakchiquel).
- The climate is mainly hot and humid, but cooler in the mountains. There are 37 volcanoes, but only 3 are active.
- Antigua, Guatemala is in the mountains. It is a famous colonial city because it has preserved the architecture from colonial times when the Spanish populated Guatemala).

Traditional Weaving

- The Mayans have lived in what is now Guatemala and Southern Mexico for hundreds of years.
- They live in the mountains. Many still follow age-old traditions.
- Because travel was very difficult in the steep mountains, each village had its slightly (or very) different language use and weaving patterns for women's blouses (*huipiles*).
- Mayan women traditionally weave by hand on a backstrap loom. It is tied to a tree and then goes around the weaver's back as she sits on the ground.

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Mayan Weaving

Guatemalan
Huipil and Skirt



Guatemalan
Hanging



Mexican
Hangings

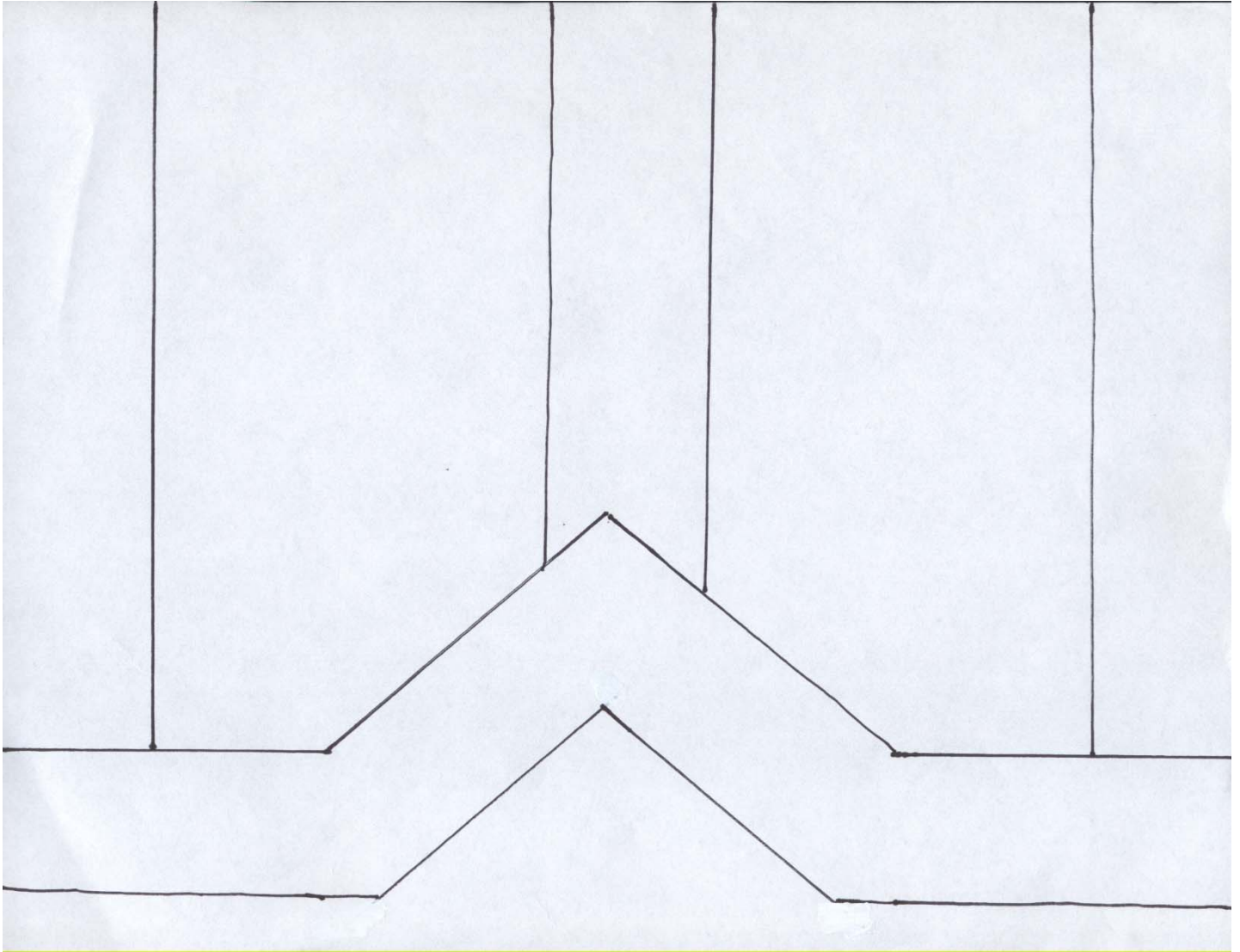


Mexican Huipil



Mexican Cloth





Huipil worksheet